

Addressing Discrimination: The Indigenous Human Rights Program

Wednesday, October 7, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. EST

Speakers:

Nick Haissell, Senior Program Advisor Justice, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Nadine Okalik, Indigenous Human Rights Law Clinic Coordinator, Odawa Native Friendship Centre

Patricia-Lee Dunnigan, Human Rights Coordinator, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre

Land Acknowledgement



CLEO acknowledges that our office is located on the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat. This land is now also home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. This area of Tkaronto, also known as Toronto, is covered by Treaty 13 signed by the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties signed by multiple Mississauga and Chippewa First Nations.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonization, anti-Indigenous racism, and white supremacy on which this city and our legal system are built. We are all Treaty people and we commit to working in solidarity towards truth and reconciliation.



Steps to Justice – free legal information

- stepstojustice.ca

Guided Pathways – help completing legal forms

- stepstojustice.ca/guided-pathways-home/

CLEO publications – free print resources

- cleo.on.ca

CLEO Connect – training for community workers

- cleoconnect.ca

What can you expect today?



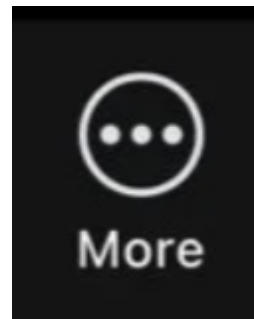
- 90 minutes (2 Q and A).
- The webinar may contain legal information. As a reminder, this is not legal advice. The information is current as of today's date Wednesday, October 7, 2026.
- Links to the recording, slides, and handout will be sent by email to all registrants within a few days.
- ASL interpretation is available today. Subtitles (closed captioning) have also been enabled.



To use the Closed Captioning feature, click on the icon with two C's in your Zoom controls:



If you don't see this icon, try clicking on the More icon with three dots:

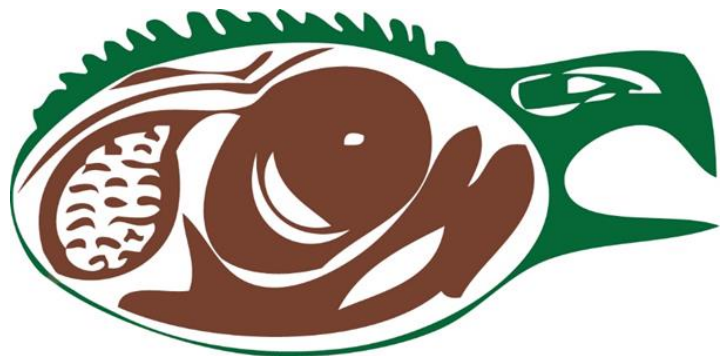




Nick Haissell, Senior Program Advisor Justice, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Nadine Okalik, Indigenous Human Rights Law Clinic Coordinator, Odawa Native Friendship Centre

Patricia-Lee Dunnigan, Human Rights Coordinator, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre



pro bono
students canada

étudiant(e)s pro
bono du canada



OFIFC

Ontario Federation of
Indigenous Friendship Centres



***STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITY
THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE:***

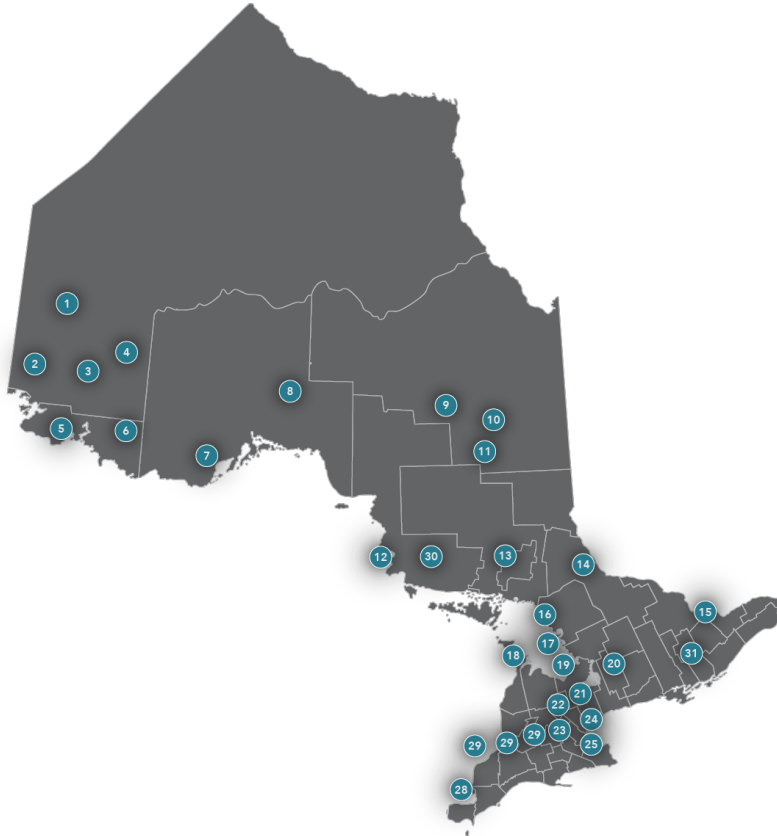
***THE INDIGENOUS
HUMAN RIGHTS
PROGRAM***

OCTOBER 7TH, 2026

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP CENTRES (OFIFC)



THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE MOVEMENT



Locations

1. Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
2. Ne-Chee Friendship Centre (Kenora)
3. Dryden Native Friendship Centre
4. Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre (Sioux Lookout)
5. United Native Friendship Centre (Fort Frances)
6. Atikokan Native Friendship Centre
7. Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
8. Thunderbird Friendship Centre (Geraldton)
9. Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre
10. Ininew Friendship Centre (Cochrane)
11. Timmins Native Friendship Centre
12. Indigenous Friendship Centre (Sault Ste. Marie)
13. N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre (Sudbury)
14. North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
15. Odawa Native Friendship Centre (Ottawa)
16. Parry Sound Friendship Centre
17. Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre (Midland)
18. M'Wikwedong Native Cultural Resource Centre (Owen Sound)
19. Barrie Native Friendship Centre
20. Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre (Peterborough)
21. Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
22. The Indigenous Network (Peel)
23. Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
24. Niagara Regional Native Centre (Niagara-on-the-Lake)
25. Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
26. N'Amerind Friendship Centre (London)
27. Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre
28. Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre of Windsor
29. Brantford Regional Indigenous Support Centre
30. Enji-maawindijiyaang (Elliot Lake)
31. Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest

Not for profit
Status blind
Culturally-based
Urban

Housing & Employment
Children & Youth
Restorative Justice
Community Wellness
Education & Training

**FRIENDSHIP
CENTRES**

Thunder Bay



The Friendship Centre Movement

- TBIFC is one of the original six Friendship Centers and was founded under the direction and leadership of Mr. Xavier Michon in 1964.
- The Center which began as "The Native Youth Club", meeting in church basements, now has 30 different programs and more than 60 employees.

Vision Statement:

- A Welcoming Indigenous community that nurtures healing, culture, traditions and self-determination.

Odawa Native Friendship Centre

- National Capital Region
- Culturally Grounded
- Self Identify
- All Stages of Life
- Traditional Teachings



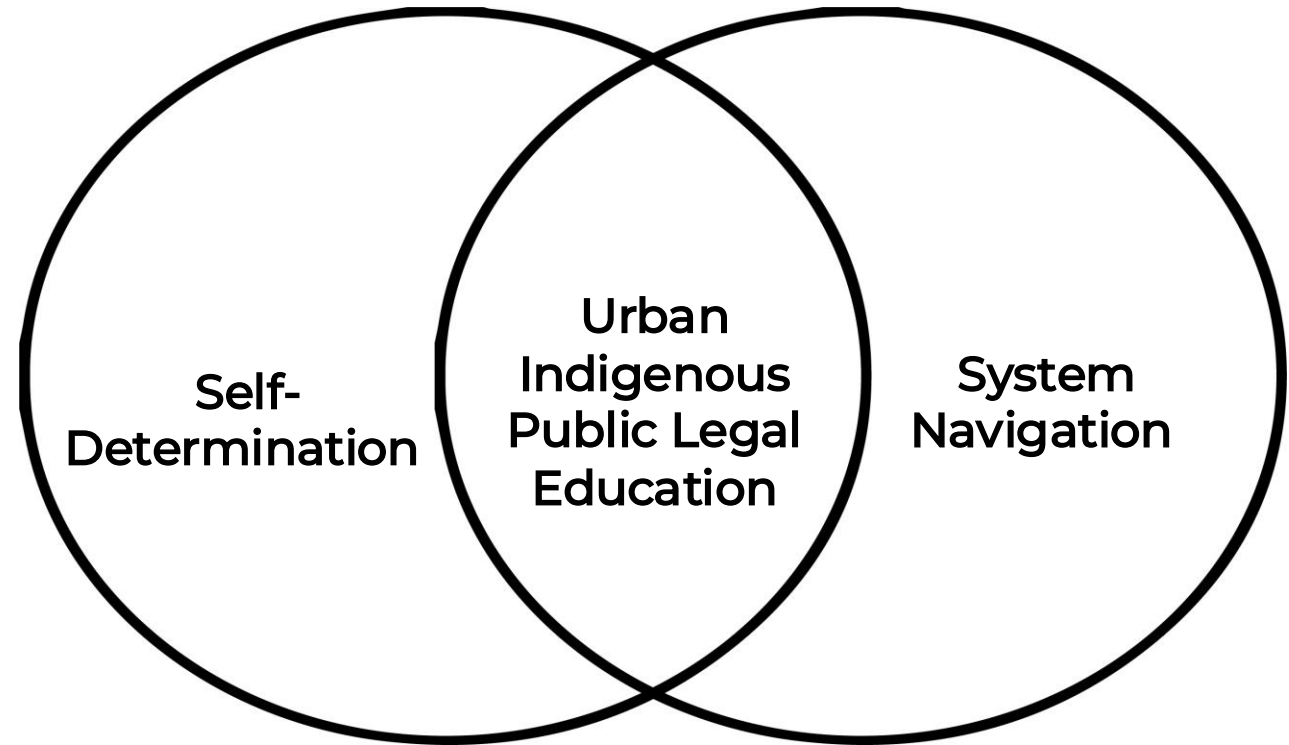
88% of Indigenous people in Ontario reside in urban and rural areas.

Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Canada.

From 2016-2021, the Indigenous population living in large urban centres rose 12.5%.

URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES & PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION



Canadian Legal System
Legislated Exclusion
Knowledge = Power
Reconciliation
Access to Justice

THE INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM



The Indigenous Human Rights
Clinic: Summary Legal Advice &
Public Legal Education

Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship
Centre & Odawa Native Friendship
Centre

Partners: Pro Bono Students
Canada, Beamish Law, Lakehead
University, University of Ottawa

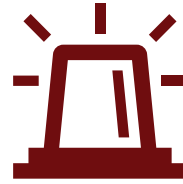
Federal



Indigenous
governance

Canadian Human Rights Act

Provincial



Local police



Healthcare



Education



Landlords &
housing



Malls



Local works &
undertakings

Ontario Human Rights Code

Protected Grounds

1	2	3	4	5
Race	Ancestry	Colour	Creed (religion)	Ethnic origin
6	7	8	9	10
Record of offences	Sex	Place of origin	Receipt of public assistance	Citizenship
11	12	13	14	15
Sexual orientation	Family status	Disability	Marital status	Age
	16	17		
	Gender identity	Gender expression		

Adverse Treatment in a Social Area



Employment

Freedom from discrimination in the workplace covers every aspect of the workplace, including applications, recruitment, training and transfers.



Housing

Everyone has the right to equal treatment when buying, selling, renting or being evicted from an apartment, house, condominium or commercial property.



Contracts

A contract is a legal agreement. The right to enter a contract on equal terms applies to all steps of entering into the agreement.



Goods & Services

Everyone has the right to be free from discrimination when receiving goods, services and using facilities.



Vocational Associations

Everyone has the right to join and be equally treated a union, professional association or other vocational organization.

Clinic Eligibility & Clinic Process

- Self-identify as Indigenous
- Live in the catchment area
- Believe they have been discriminated against & are seeking summary legal advice, **or**
- Want to learn more about discrimination and/or human rights from a lawyer
- Clients receive a **one-hour** summary legal advice (SLA) consultation about their human rights. Key points of the SLA are:
 - It is **general** or **high-level** legal advice
 - The volunteer lawyer *cannot* become the client's "official" lawyer & *cannot* represent them in court or write documents for them
 - A short SLA Agreement is signed

Legal Information Consultation

- Legal information consultations are more conversational and relaxed. The consultations should focus on the following three functions:
 - Lawyer's educating clients about discrimination and human rights, thereby empowering them to make decisions about their human rights, to protect themselves, and to spot discrimination when it occurs.
 - A device to increase awareness of the Clinic's, and ultimately increase the number of clients seeking legal advice.
 - Build trust between individuals and lawyers, and between individuals and the Clinic.

Public Legal Education

**INDIGENOUS
HUMAN RIGHTS
PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION**

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS
LAW IN ONTARIO

Open to Community

When:
Monday February 2, 2026
6pm-8pm

Where:
Italian Cultural Centre
132 South Algoma Street

Refreshments Provided!

Enter for the chance to win a
door prize!



**HUMAN RIGHTS LAW
& DISCRIMINATION**

**FREE PUBLIC LEGAL
EDUCATION SESSION**

WEDNESDAY, FEB 18, 6-8PM

Information Campaigns



FACT SHEET #1:

Discrimination and harassment experiences by Indigenous people while shopping



Stop Anti-Indigenous Discrimination

No Room for Racism
in Retail & Shopping

Arrêtez la discrimination contre les Autochtones

Pas de place pour le racisme
dans les commerces



Barriers and Lessons Learned



Engagement &
in-person events



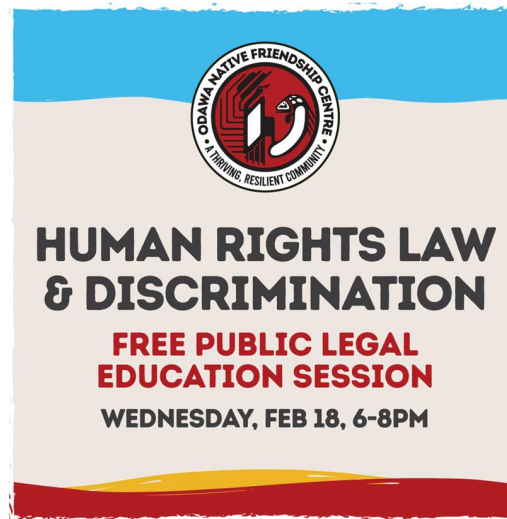
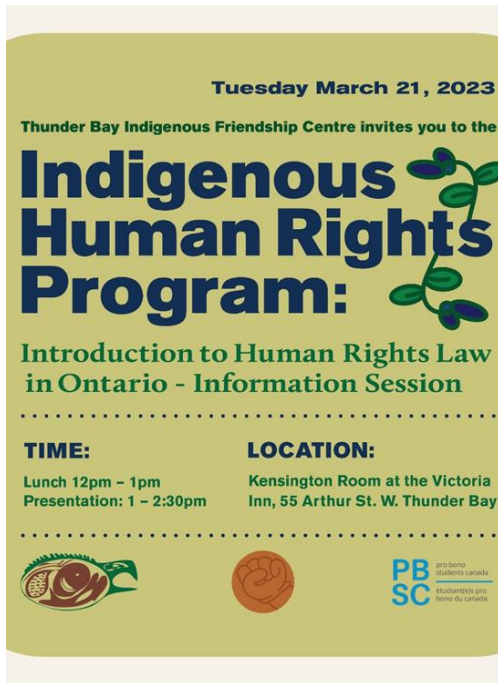
Distrust of legal
system



Frustration at
siloed approach



Immediate
Needs



Miigwetch!
Questions?





[Find your community legal clinic](#) or call 1-800-668-8258

Legal Aid Ontario: [How do I apply for Legal Aid?](#)

[Visit Pro Bono Ontario](#) or call 1-855-255-7256

[Ontario Legal Information Centre](#) offers appointments with a lawyer, in English or French.

Thank you for joining us!



Subscribe to [CLEO Connect](#) for updates on new legal information and upcoming webinars.

QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?

Contact info@cleoconnect.ca